

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



No. 306

March 30, 1939.

BOOKS GO TO READERS

Since the mountain wouldn't come to Mahomet, he went to the mountain. Something of the kind is happening with library service for rural communities. Even where there is a county library, people living at a distance out in the country find few opportunities to take out books.

One way of distributing the county library books more widely is to establish small branch libraries at cross-roads towns. Another is to have book trucks stop regularly at farm homes scattered over the county. The traveling library is developing as a rural institution of great popularity, where there is sufficient financial support.

Where funds have been collected or appropriated for the purpose, a well-fitted "bookmobile" makes the rounds of the more remote farms, or of the community centers that have established book stations. Sometimes the school lends a truck and somebody volunteers to drive it. Or the county home demonstration agent, as she goes to various community meetings, may carry a small supply of books from the county library in the back of her car.

Estimates say that more than 40,000,000 rural Americans are out of reach of local public libraries. Fourteen States have library bills under consideration at present. Meantime, the bookmobile is helping, and groups of local women are doing what they can to provide more books for rural readers, both children and adults.

Note to Extension Editor: If you have examples from your own State you will probably want to substitute them for the next two paragraphs.

Cherokee County, S. C., for example, has accumulated 2,600 books that have circulated among more than 45,000 readers in the past 2 years. The bookmobile makes 64 stops in 35 communities on a 2-week schedule, carrying 500 books each trip. Books are classified under travel, fiction, mystery, historical novels, biography, music, and art, home life, and community life. Home demonstration club members tried to read at least eight books a year and to include one book from each class.

To get libraries started without much money, Miss _____ (Name) of the _____ (State) Extension Service cites two schemes. Farm women in Ohio County, Ky. asked each member of a home demonstration club to plant a potato. The yield from this potato was sold and the money was given to the club for books. In Cabarrus County, N. C., club members carry one to three eggs to each meeting to be sold for the library fund.

The American Library Association is glad to help communities that wish to start a county library service. The association recommends such steps as visiting the nearest county library to see how it functions; enlisting the support of key people in the county -- the school superintendent, the extension agents, the presidents of rural organizations; getting speakers at important meetings to talk about library service and how to start a campaign; asking the American Library Association for information about other county library services. The Association's headquarters are at 520 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Ill.

